Commission on Forensic Science
Standards and Certifications Advisory Committee (SAC)
AGENDA

June 11th, 2018
Immediately following the Commission on Forensic Science's Meeting (~ Noon – 1:00 PM)
200 S. Adams Street, Wilmington DE

Voting Committee Members:
Jamie Armstrong, CODIS Administrator, DFS
Johna Esposito, Quality Assurance Manager, DFS
Dr. Krystal Hans, Assistant Professor, Department of Biological Sciences, DSU
Robyn Quinn, Laboratory Manager II - FES
Susan Wilgus, Forensic Nurse, Public Defender Office

Agenda:

1. Welcome, Call to Order-Johna Esposito

2. Review and Approval of Minutes from April 9th, 2018

3. Discussions of responses from the Commission to the SAC Report.

    a. What initiatives require further investigation?

    b. What are the goals and objectives of the committee now?

4. Adjourn

Commission on Forensic Science
Standards and Certifications Advisor Committee (SAC)
REPORT TO COMMISSION
Date Here

The Standard and Certifications Advisor Committee (SAC) is researching initiatives to attract and retain the best qualified candidates for technical positions at the DFS. The information herein is a preliminary report on several possible initiatives. Because the data gathered to bolster the request for such initiatives changes from year-to year, we would like to know which initiatives, if any, the Commission is most likely to move forward with in the near future. We can then focus our data-gathering efforts to bolster the preliminary data and provide the most relevant information for that initiative.

Initiatives to Attract and Keep the Most Qualified Employees

1. **Capture Statistics on Retention Rate of DFS Employees** – Average retention rates for the past five years (As calculated each year from 2013-2017, by dividing the number of analysts who stayed for a whole year by the total number of analysts who started working in a given year . . . note that analysts who started mid-year are not included in this calculation):

    a. Laboratory Technicians: 55%

    b. Chemists in FCU: 70%

    c. Chemists in Toxicology: 82%

    d. DNA Analysts: 83%

    e. Management (LMs and QAM): 90%

Note that, although 80% retention rate may not sound like an issue, whenever an analyst leaves, there are major consequences to the laboratory, and 80% means that about 1 in 5 analysts leave every year. First of all, because the first 6-18 months are spent in training, there is a large time investment in new employees. This means that, even after time has been spent waiting to post for a vacancy, gathering and reviewing applications, interviewing, and waiting for the completion of background (which takes about 3-5 months total), a newly hired employee cannot begin contributing to the case workload for several months. Additionally, the division was recently told by the AG's office that, at least in toxicology, because analysts must be available to testify in court, once an analyst has alerted her supervisor that she is moving on to another opportunity, the supervisor must remove her from casework ideally at least 90 days prior to the employee actually leaving the laboratory. Should a case that the

analyst tested go to court after the analyst leaves, either the state must pay to bring the analyst back to testify or the case will have to be pled out because one person in the chain of custody is no longer immediately available.

All totaled up, whenever an analyst resigns from the DFS, it results in the laboratory being short staffed for a minimum of 9 months, and, in most cases, closer to 12-18 months. Resignations result in decreased moral for employees left to take on the extra work and increased turnaround time, which could affect the safety of the citizens of Delaware as trials are put on hold or dismissed.

2. **Gather Salary Data for Nearby/Similar Laboratories** - Salary comparison data for nearby labs. Ideally, when fleshed out, this data would take into consideration actual pay (not just advertised pay ranges), other forms of compensation (retirement, benefits, healthcare, etc.), and requirements of the positions (years' experience, certification requirements, etc.).

Unit and Position Title	Location	Salary Range
FBU Forensic Scientist (Grade 9)	D.C.	51,039-65,709
FBU Forensic Scientist (Grade 10)	D.C.	55,991-72,146
FBU Forensic Scientist I (Grade 11)	D.C.	61,491-79,275
FBU Forensic Scientist II (Grade 12)	D.C.	76,082-97,340
FBU Forensic Scientist III (Grade 13)	D.C.	87-657-112,956
Management; Lead Scientist, Technical Leader (Grade 14) Non Union	D.C.	95,791-123,403
Management; FBU Manager (Grade 14)	D.C.	99,659-139,522
Forensic Scientist I	New Jersey	61,784-87,820
Forensic Scientist II	New Jersey	70,903-101,039
Forensic Scientist III	New Jersey	77,767-110,979
Assistant Chief Forensic Scientist	New Jersey	73,867-107,117
Chief Forensic Scientist	New Jersey	83,210-116,476
Forensic DNA Scientist Trainee (Group 6)	Pennsylvania	41,956-63,785
Forensic DNA Scientist I (Group 7)	Pennsylvania	47,883-72,822
Forensic DNA Scientist II (Group 8)	Pennsylvania	54,690-83,052
Forensic DNA Scientist Supervisor (Group 9)	Pennsylvania	62,455-94,846
Forensic DNA Scientist Director (Group 11)	Pennsylvania	81,330-123,600
Forensic Scientist I (Grade 16)	Maryland (State Police)	44,017-70,265
Forensic Scientist II (Grade 19)	Maryland (State Police)	53,193-85,401
Forensic Scientist III (Grade 21)	Maryland (State Police)	60,543-97,203
Forensic Scientist Advanced (Grade 22)	Maryland (State Police)	64,608-103,743
Forensic Scientist Supervisor (Grade 23)	Maryland (State Police)	68,959-110,729
Forensic Scientist Manager (Grade 24)	Maryland (State Police)	73,612-118,197
Deputy Director Forensic Sciences (Grade 25)	Maryland (State Police)	78,595-126,186
Director Forensic Sciences (Grade 26)	Maryland (State Police)	83,836-134,749

3. **Develop Career Ladders with Tiered Pay** – While the analysts already have some additional "tiers" to their career ladder due to the SMV (selective market variation) system (i.e. two levels at ACII and two levels at ACIII, the lower of which is identical in requirements to the upper level of an ACII), the managers have no such tier system and, therefore, have virtually no career ladder.

   a. The goal would be to use information from other laboratories with a tiered system as well as salary statistics from nearby laboratories to create a multi-level career ladder for all technical positions within the DFS.

   b. If nothing else, it could be argued that the current SMV table should be altered to increase salaries and update the requirements so that the lower tier of the level III was a separate "step" in the ladder from the upper tier of level II as well as to include the laboratory managers.

4. **Argue for DFS-Specific Positions** - "Analytical Chemists," "Forensic DNA Analysts," "Laboratory Managers," etc. are state-wide position titles. Therefore, the pay and posted job description for these positions are limited. The requirements to work within an accredited forensic laboratory are often stricter and consequences of error more dire than working in other laboratories so it could be argued that these positions should be separate and distinct from others in the state. If the positions within the DFS were a totally separate position/classification within the state system, then job requirements and associated pay scales could be created to be more in line with surrounding state laboratories. Additional reasoning behind this change include:

    a. DNA analysts at DFS must comply with QAS standards.
    b. The state's requirements for the position should mirror the requirements imposed by ISO, QAS, etc.
    c. Would prevent non-forensic analysts from being repositioned into the DFS (i.e. in the event of coming back after long term disability).
    d. Forensic analysts testify in court

Is there any additional information that the commission requires regarding any of these information-gathering or justification initiatives? If so, please let us know what the purpose would be, the date by which the information would be needed, and any other specifics as far as what information would be most helpful.